

Poster Preparation and Printing  
**Student Guidelines**  
College Office for Undergraduate Education

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These guidelines are merely suggestions for use when creating a presentation poster and should not be considered *rules* which must be followed. Ultimately, each poster is different.

Most poster printers can print posters saved as Powerpoint files (ppt) or those created in other programs and saved as PDF files. If you will be printing on the SIRE program printer, at least 50% of your poster area must be white. Do use color, but there must be large white spaces as well. Even light color filling the whole background is still color! You will be charged \$50 for printing a poster with too much color.

**Remember: Unless you are a graphic artist, a good poster will take at least a week to put together.**

- Setting the size of your poster in Powerpoint
  - On the menu bar, choose FILE, then PAGE SETUP.
  - Change ***Slides sized for*** to “Custom.”
  - Change ***Orientation for Slides*** to “Landscape.”
  - The Width of your poster is **variable**. In the Width field enter your poster’s width (most posters are 48-52 inches; the maximum is 54 inches).
  - The Height of your poster is **fixed** at 44 inches because the width of the paper roll used in the printer is 44 inches. In the Height field, enter 44.
- Poster Layout
  - Your poster should contain highlights of your project and body text should be easily readable from more than 4 feet away. This allows more people to read your poster at the same time.
  - Visually appealing and legible posters make the biggest impact. To enhance the readability of your wide poster, text sections should be divided into columns (usually 3-4). Columns can be achieved by using text boxes or columns.
  - Text flow should be from left to right, starting with the upper left of the text columns and ending at the lower right.
  - Tables or graphs of statistical data, drawings or photographs can improve poster appeal, but must be important to poster content.
  - Keep the design simple and avoid flashy backgrounds that detract from the content.
  - Posters printed on the SIRE poster printer in the College Office for Undergraduate Education must have a white background.
- Poster elements
  - Title
  - Authors(s) – discuss with your research mentor whether he/she should be listed as a co-author or listed in the acknowledgements.
  - Affiliation
  - Poster body (in columns using text boxes, graphs and photos)
    - Introduction/Background
    - Methods/Process
    - Results/Findings

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- Conclusion(s) and Implications of your findings
- Acknowledgements, i.e., funding sources (SIRE?), mentors, others of support not mentioned at the top as co-authors.
- Content
  - Your poster content should be closely related to your published abstract and changes over the course of your research should be reflected in both your poster & your abstract.
  - Ensure that all claims and conclusions are supported by data on the poster or by references.
  - Do not include speculative or unsubstantiated comments.
  - If your abstract involves a device or instrument, avoid making comparisons to competing products unless substantiated by data or references.
  - Large blocks of text should be avoided! Use bullet points and elaborate on them when you present the poster (like you would do for an oral presentation- not everything you say needs to be on the poster).
  - Use schematics, photos and/or lines to make your poster more visually interesting. Not all projects have data graphs, but all posters should have graphs, photos or other images that illustrate the ideas/concepts/topics/data discussed in the presentation.
- Text formatting
  - Use a clear font for text. Imagine trying to read it from 3-4 feet away.
  - Use upper and lower case letters. **Never use “All Caps” for emphasis.** Better options are:
    - bold
    - italic
    - bold/italic
    - increasing the font size
  - Be consistent with fonts and font sizes.
    - Posters should be readable from four feet away and large type sizes are necessary. (72 point uppercase letters are one inch high, 36 point letters are ½ inch high and 18 point are ¼ inch high.
    - Use ~96-144+ point type for the title.
    - Use ~60+ point for the author's name.
    - Use ~48+ point for section headings (subheads) and affiliation.
    - Use ~30-38 point type for the body copy.
    - Use ~16 point type for fine print.
  - Use color for highlighting and for emphasis.
    - Format the text box (right mouse click) to create a background color (use a lighter color rather than a dark shade, to maintain contrast with your black typeface).
    - Format the text box (right mouse click) to put lines around your text box. The color and line width can be changed to suit your needs.
  - The use of rules (lines to organize the visual space) can convey a sense of order to the reader.

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- Allow plenty of white space throughout the poster to avoid a cluttered appearance.
  - Avoid using so many decorative elements that the message of your poster is lost.
  
  - Final steps before printing
    - Carefully proof your poster; it must be your final copy. Editing will not be permitted within the Office for Undergraduate Education.
    - Print it out on a regular printer when proofing.
    - Be advised reprints will cost \$20.
    - Have plan for transport of finished poster (44in cardboard tube strongly suggested [available from office supply stores or online])
    - Create a professional poster. It begins your professional portfolio.
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Lots of detailed poster advice for science students can be found below, however the advice is good for students not presenting scientific work as well.

Purrington, C.B. 2006. Advice on designing scientific posters.  
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm> Accessed [9/23/2008].

Contact Leah Anderson Roesch at [leah.roesch@emory.edu](mailto:leah.roesch@emory.edu) if you have other questions.